

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 02484 071713Z

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 966

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2484

NODIS

FOR ATHERTON FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS US XF

SUBJ: ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES

REF: STATE 82575

1. THE CABINET IS EXPECTED TO DISCUSS SETTLEMENT POLICY, INCLUDING QADOUM, AFTER THE PASSOVER HOLIDAY WHICH MEANS PROBABLY ON APRIL 25 AT THE EARLIEST. I BELIEVE THAT RABIN INDEED MAY BE CONSIDERING AS ONE OF HIS OPTIONS A COMPROMISE SOLUTION OF THE QADOUM PROBLEM INVOLVING THE AUTHORIZATION OF NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK AND ELSEWHERE. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT HE MAY SEEK A FURTHER POSTPONEMENT OF THE ENTIRE MATTER. IT SEEMS LESS LIKELY THAT HE WILL DECIDE UPON THE FORCED EVACUATION OF THE SETTLERS WHICH, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, WOULD PRECIPITATE THE RESIGNATION OF THE NRP MINISTERS AND POSSIBLY LEAD TO A CABINET CRISIS.

2. AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, THE LAST THREE TIMES I MET WITH ALLON I MADE CLEAR OUR OPPOSITION TO ANY SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. THIS PLUS THE SCRANTON STATEMENT I FEEL LEAVES THE ISRAELIS WITH NO DOUBTS AS TO OUR POSITION. A DEMARCHE TO RABIN WOULD INEVITABLY LEAK AND PRIME MINISTER WOULD THEN BE FORCED TO ADOPT EXTREME MEASURES IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE HIS MUSCLE. INCIDENTALLY--AND IN ALL FRANKNESS-- IT WAS BASICALLY FOR THIS REASON THAT I FELT SCRANTON STATEMENT

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 02484 071713Z

WAS A TACTICAL BLUNDER OF TIMING IN TERMS OF OUR EFFECTIVENESS

HERE ALTHOUGH I FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS RATIONALE AS A BACKDROP FOR OUR VETO AND, AS YOU KNOW, AM IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH ITS SUBSTANCE. IF NOTWITHSTANDING MY ADVICE YOU SHOULD DECIDE TO RAISE ISSUE WITH RABIN, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD NOT PUT OURSELVES IN THE POSITION OF TELLING HIM HOW WE THINK HE OUGHT TO RESOLVE THE QADOUM PROBLEM BUT RATHER EMPHASIZE OUR FIRM OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT AUTHORIZATION OF NEW SETTLEMENTS.

3. IN ANY CASE, WE SHOULD NOT HAVE ANY ILLUSIONS THAT IT WILL STOP HIM FROM AGREEING TO AUTHORIZE NEW SETTLEMENTS IF HE SEES NO OTHER WAY OUT. AS RECENTLY AS MARCH 31, ALLON SAID PUBLICLY THAT ISRAEL WILL CONTINUE TO DECIDE ON NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ON THE BASIS OF ITS SECURITY INTERESTS. UNFORTUNATELY, I BELIEVE THE CABINET WOULD HAVE NO QUALMS ABOUT AUTHORIZING NEW SETTELEMENTS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SO-CALLED ALLON PLAN.
TOON

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